

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (currently amended) A breathing apparatus comprising:

a tank adapted to contain air under pressure operatively associated with regulator means to enable delivery of said pressurized air to a user of said apparatus;

a filter/~~canister~~ system adapted to enable ambient air to pass through a filter medium having a mesh that is sufficient to trap solid particles in ambient air and/or to enable ambient air in need of cleaning to have a residence time in contact with media that is sufficient to decontaminate contaminating vapors and gases from said ambient air to form clean air;

means adapted to move said ambient air into said filter system, through said filter medium in said filter system and thence into operative relationship with a user of the apparatus;

a valve assembly ~~means~~ operatively associated with said filter system and said tank that is adapted to control the flow of cleaned air from said filter system and ~~fresh~~ air from said pressure tank, ~~such that a user can determine whether to breath cleaned air or pressurized air;~~ and

conduit means disposed between, and in operative association with, said means to move said ambient air and means directly associated with the user of said apparatus through which air is provided to a user of said apparatus; and

control means associated with said valve assembly and adapted to control said means to move ambient air into and through said filter system, such that a user can determine whether to breathe cleaned air or pressurized air.

Claim 2. (original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising plural filter/decontamination elements.

Claim 3. (original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a face mask adapted to tightly fit a wearer.

Claim 4. (currently amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 3 further comprising first conduit means between said tank and said face mask, second conduit means between said filter/~~decontamination means~~ system and said face mask, and ~~valving means~~ at least one valve operatively associate with said conduit means adapted to control the flow of cleaned air from said filter/~~decontamination means~~ system or air from said tank to said user.

Claim 5. (currently amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 3 further comprising a plenum chamber operatively associated with said tank and said filter/~~decontamination means~~ system such that cleaned air from said filter/~~decontamination means~~ system and from said tank, respectively, are adapted to respectively flow into said plenum chamber and conduit means disposed between said plenum chamber and said face mask.

Claim 6. (currently amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 3 having at least one one-way exhaust ~~valving means~~ valve operatively associated with said face mask.

Claims 7-9. (canceled)

Claim 10. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said control means controls said moving means in conjunction with operation of said valve assembly.

Claim 11. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said control means is adapted to be operated manually, automatically, or semi-automatically.

Claim 12. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising means adapted to determine if the composition of air emerging from said filter system comprises a sufficiently small amount of particulate matter to be safely breathable.

Claim 13. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said tank comprises a plurality of containers adapted to contain air under pressure.

Claim 14. (new) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said means to move ambient air comprises a fan having an electric motor.